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Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda*
High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Statement submitted by Sacro Militare Ordine Costantiniano di San Giorgio, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

14-32677 (E) 190514

Please recycle

Statement

Sacro Militare Ordine Costantiniano di San Giorgio (Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George) has the historic mission of helping the sick, the needy and the most disadvantaged in society. The Order provides medical and social assistance, disaster relief in the case of armed conflicts and natural catastrophes, emergency services, help for the elderly, the handicapped and children in need, first-aid training, and support for refugees and internally displaced persons regardless of race, origin or religion.

The Millennium Development Goals represent an unprecedented partnership among nations to better the lives of disadvantaged people across the globe. As the 2015 target date approaches, many countries have already made extraordinary progress, improving the lives of millions of people. But not all countries or regions of the world are on track to meet the Goals.

The Millennium Development Goal indicators reveal vast disparities between developed and developing countries, and even among developing countries there are wide differences. Moreover, developing nations face numerous barriers to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Some of these barriers are unique and country-specific, while others are broadly shared. Common problems faced by developing nations include conflict, instability, poor starting conditions, weak governance and institutions, and environmental degradation. To meet the Millennium Development Goals and create a sustainable path to development, countries must adopt policies and programmes to overcome these problems.

Developed countries and civil society have a role to play in assisting developing countries to overcome these barriers and meet the Goals. Developed countries must take the lead and continue with their pledge to renew and strengthen partnerships for development, including by providing aid and promoting policies and programmes. Aid donors from civil society, on the other hand, must ensure that development assistance is flexible enough to help countries address the above-mentioned challenges and meet the Millennium Development Goals.

The Order believes that the challenges faced by developing countries must be addressed to decrease the risk of putting the Millennium Development Goals beyond the reach of many countries. For its part, the Order reaffirms its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and underscores its intention to engage in collaborative projects that advance, within its sphere of influence, the principles of the Goals as well as the broader development goals of the United Nations relating to promoting sustainable development at all levels.

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Statement submitted by Society for Upliftment of Masses, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement

In order to sustain gains relating to health in the post-2015 era, the following issues should be given priority attention. This analysis is in the context of India.

1. Sustain the momentum for health care built by the Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals relating to health have helped us to achieve commendable progress with regard to reducing child and maternal mortality and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. For example, the under-five mortality rate in Southern Asia has declined from 117 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 66 in 2010, with India achieving a still better rate of 63. These concerns should continue getting priority attention in the post-2015 development agenda.

2. Ensure access to affordable drugs

Access to affordable drugs in developing countries was one of the lesser known targets of the Millennium Development Goals ("In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries"). According to the report of the Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force on Goal 8, essential medicines continue to be unaffordable and insufficiently accessible to the poor. Drugs are a major component of health care and access to affordable drugs should therefore be a stand-alone goal in the post-2015 development agenda. In India, for example, despite the huge infrastructure for the delivery of health-care services set up by the Government, the private sector accounts for nearly 80 per cent of the cost of outpatient treatment, 71 per cent of which is for prescription medicines. This is mainly due to the well-established pharma-doctor nexus. It is necessary to explore policy options to ensure easy access to affordable drugs.

3. Reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases

Non-communicable diseases are currently the leading cause of death worldwide. In 2008, almost two–thirds of deaths in the world were due to non-communicable diseases, comprising mainly of cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and chronic lung diseases. According to the World Health Organization (2011), with over 5.2 million deaths in 2008, non-communicable diseases have become a number one killer in India too. It is therefore necessary to have disease-specific targets, which should include parameters for prevention, control, treatment and access to health care.

4. Stop unethical medical practices

Unethical medical practices are another major source of concern. With more and more health-care facilities being set up by the corporate world, where profit is the major driving force, it is necessary to put a stop to the unethical medical practices plaguing our people. It is necessary to have suitable parameters to address concerns relating to prenatal sex determination tests, medical negligence, unethical clinical trials, misleading advertising and quackery.

5. Provide geriatric and palliative care

Owing to increased longevity, the proportion of elderly people in the total population is increasing very fast. According to the 2011 census, there are currently 100 million elderly people in India. This is projected to increase to 315 million (20 per cent of the population) by 2050. A goal-oriented approach is required to address their concerns and to give them a life with dignity. There is also a great need to prescribe specific targets for geriatric and palliative care, including age-friendly environments and housing.

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The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement

The growing income inequality of the past two to three decades has negatively impacted the current social, economic and environmental crises. An Oxfam study has shown that the wealth of the 85 richest people in world is equal to that of the bottom 3.5 billion people. Meanwhile *Forbes* lists the number of billionaires at a record 1,426. The United Nations has acknowledged that $50 billion is lost annually by Africa. The recent realization of the International Monetary Fund is that reducing inequality is not only good but essential for economic growth. It is in this context that we must look at the challenges of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Climate disasters are an important area that requires immediate attention if we want to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The effects of climate change have led to a growing sense of outrage in developing nations, many of which have contributed little to the pollution that is linked to rising temperatures and sea levels but will suffer the most from the consequences. It is an issue of global social justice that needs to be ingrained in the Goals.

People losing their land and livelihoods to big corporations are other challenges for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Sovereign States must protect their citizens rather than allow them to be hostages to transnational corporations. A strong accountability mechanism to regulate the impact of corporations on people and the planet is pivotal. The United Nations should reinstate the Centre on Transnational Corporations instead of partnering with corporations.

Policy recommendations

The organization's policy recommendations are as follows:

- Promotion of decent work for all as a social and macroeconomic policy
- Emphasis on public spending for quality health care, education and sanitation
- Urgent action on universal social protection through a redistributive wealth and tax system
- Gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in all policies, and prevention of all forms of discrimination
- Partnership only with those private sector entities that respect the common good and environmental protection
- Promotion of the participation of civil society in implementing programmes with accountability
- Immediate attention to address climate change by phasing out fossil fuels

Conclusion

The current social, economic and environmental crises are the consequences of the greed of corporations, which are at war with people and the planet. We need an alternative system and a new way of relating with people and the planet beyond gross domestic product.